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EXAMINER

FERGUSON, MICHAEL P

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3679

DATE MAILED: 03/01/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/942,112

Applicant(s)

MARSHALL ET AL.

Examiner

Michael P. Ferguson

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 03 February 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 23 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-22 and 24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 28 August 2001 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Examiner notes that the Office action mailed on December 3, 2004 was a non-final action. Accordingly, the advisory action mailed on May 26, 2005 was improper, and has been vacated.

Election/Restrictions

1. Claim 23 is withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected species, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Election was made **without** traverse in the reply filed on September 13, 2004.

Information Disclosure Statement

2. The information disclosure statement filed December 18, 2001 fails to comply with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(2), which requires a legible copy of each cited foreign patent document; each non-patent literature publication or that portion which caused it to be listed; and all other information or that portion which caused it to be listed. It has been placed in the application file, but the information referred to therein has not been considered.

Examiner notes that copies of Australian patent documents 127,432 and 202,340, listed in the information disclosure statement filed December 18, 2001, have not been received.

Claim Objections

3. Claims 6 and 16 are objected to because of the following informalities:

Claim 6 (line 1) recites "of claim 1". It should recite --of claim 2--.

Claim 16 (line 1) recites "a opening". It should recite --an opening--.

For the purpose of examining the application, it is assumed that appropriate correction has been made.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

4. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

5. Claims 7, 10 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 7 (lines 3-4) recite "a first bullet proof plate; a second bullet proof plate". It is unclear as to what particular structural features deem the first and second plates "bullet proof", as such structural features have not been claimed. Accordingly, the metes and bounds of the claim cannot be determined.

Claim 10 (lines 1-4) recite "A bullet proof joint comprising: a first bullet proof plate; a second bullet proof plate". It is unclear as to what particular structural features deem the first and second plates "bullet proof", as such structural features have not been claimed. Accordingly, the metes and bounds of the claim cannot be determined.

Claim 13 (lines 1-3) recite "A bullet proof joint comprising: a pair of bullet proof steel plates". It is unclear as to what particular structural features deem the plates "bullet proof", as such structural features have not been claimed. Accordingly, the metes and bounds of the claim cannot be determined.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

6. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

7. Claims 1-4,7,9-11 and 16-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Lendi (US 3,969,855).

As to claim 1, Lendi discloses a joint capable of use with bullet traps, the joint comprising:

a first plate **17**;

a second plate **17** disposed in a linear arrangement with the first plate so as to form a joint;

a facing strip **4** disposed along the joint, the facing strip having a first end and a second end with lateral edges **23** extending along the sides therebetween configured for engaging the first plate and the second plate, the facing strip being bent between the lateral edges of the facing strip so as to slope outwardly toward the first plate and the second plate and contact the first plate and the second plate only at the lateral edges of the facing strip;

a backing means **9** placed along the joint on the side of the first and second plates opposite the facing strip: and

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at least one bolt **10** for attaching the facing strip to the backing means, the at least one bolt being attached to the facing strip without penetrating therethrough (Figures 1-4).

As to claim 2, Lendi discloses a joint comprising at least one bracket **22** attached to the facing strip **4** for receiving a bolt **10** (Figure 4).

As to claim 3, Lendi discloses a joint wherein the at least one bracket **22** comprises an opening for sliding a bolt **10** into the bracket (Figure 4).

As to claim 4, Lendi discloses a joint wherein the at least one bracket **22** comprises at least two brackets (not shown; inherently, at opposite ends of facing strip **4**) each having an opening for receiving a bolt **10**, and wherein the openings on the at least two brackets are disposed on opposite sides of the brackets from one another (Figures 3-4).

As to claim 7, Lendi discloses a joint capable of use with a bullet trap, the joint comprising:

- a first plate **17**;

- a second plate **17** having an edge disposed adjacent an edge of the first plate;

- a facing strip **4** having a bent central portion and walls having lateral edges **23** extending substantially the length of the facing strip and extending away from the bent central portion, the facing strip disposed along the adjacent edges of the first and second plates such that only the lateral edges of the facing strip contact the first and second plates; and

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at least one bracket **22** attached to the facing strip for engaging a bolt **10** so as to hold the bolt to the facing strip without penetrating therethrough; and

at least one bolt **10** for holding the facing strip against the first and second plates (Figures 1-4).

As to claim 9, Lendi discloses a joint wherein the at least one bracket **22** comprises a plurality of brackets (not shown; inherently, at opposite ends of facing strip **4**), each of the brackets having an opening for receiving a bolt **10** and at least two of the brackets having the opening on opposing sides thereof (Figures 3-4).

As to claim 10, Lendi discloses a joint comprising:

a first plate **17**;

a second plate **17** having an edge thereof disposed adjacent an edge of the first plate;

a facing strip **4** configured to engage the first and second plates, the facing strip being bent along the center thereof such that only the edges **23** of the facing strip which are parallel to the bend contact the plates; and

at least one bracket **22** attached to the facing strip and having an opening capable of receiving the head of a bolt **10** and for holding the bolt to the facing strip without penetrating therethrough; and

at least one bolt **10** for holding the facing strip against the plates (Figures 1-4).

As to claim 11, Lendi discloses a joint wherein the at least one bracket **22** comprises a plurality of brackets (not shown; inherently, at opposite ends of facing strip

4) having openings, and wherein at least two of the brackets having openings disposed on opposite sides from one another (Figures 3-4).

As to claim 16, Lendi discloses a method capable of reducing splatter through a opening in a bullet trap, the method comprising:

disposing first and second plates **17** adjacent one another so as to leave an opening;

selecting a facing strip **4**, the facing strip being bent lengthwise into an angle;

selecting a plurality of attachment bolts **10**;

attaching the plurality of attachment bolts to the facing strip such that the bolts do not penetrate the facing strip;

placing a facing strip over the opening generally parallel to the opening so that the facing strip slopes rearwardly and outwardly such that the only portion of the facing strip brought into engagement with the first and second plates to secure the plates together is the lateral edges **23** of the facing strip (Figures 1-4).

As to claim 17, Lendi discloses a method comprising attaching the plurality of attachment bolts **10** to the facing strip **4** with brackets **22** (not shown; inherently, at opposite ends of facing strip **4**) prior to the placement of the facing strip against the plates **17** (Figures 3-4).

As to claim 18, Lendi discloses a method comprising removably positioning the bolts **10** in the brackets **22** (Figure 4).

As to claim 19, Lendi discloses a method wherein at least two of the brackets **4** (not shown; inherently, at opposite ends of facing strip **4**) have openings for receiving

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the bolts **10**, and wherein the openings are disposed on opposing sides of the brackets (Figures 3-4).

As to claim 20, Lendi discloses a method capable of forming a section of a bullet trap, the method comprising:

placing first and second plates **17** adjacent one another so as to leave a seam therebetween;

selecting a joint strip having a facing strip **4** which is beveled to have two rearwardly extending walls terminating at lateral edges **23** and a bracket **22** attached to the facing strip for holding an end of a bolt **10** to the facing strip, the bracket being attached to the facing strip independent of the bolt; and

covering the seam between the plates with the facing strip so that the bolt extends through the seam: and

engaging the lateral edges of the facing strip with the first and second plates so that the only portion of the facing strip which touches the first and second plates is the lateral edges (Figures 1-4).

As to claim 21, Lendi discloses a method comprising placing a backing strip **9** along the seam on the side of the plates **17** opposite the joint strip (Figure 4).

As to claim 22, Lendi discloses a method comprising selecting a joint strip having a plurality of brackets **4** (not shown; inherently, at opposite ends of facing strip **4**) attached to the facing strip **4** for holding a plurality of bolts **10** (Figures 3-4).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. Claims 13-15 and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lendi.

As to claim 13, Lendi discloses a joint comprising:

a pair of metal plates **17** disposed such that an edge of one plate is adjacent the edge of the other plate;

a joint strip disposed to cover the adjacent edges of the plates comprising:

a facing strip **4** defining a pair of sloped walls extending outwardly and rearwardly from a central portion extending along a long axis of the facing strip such that only the edges **23** of the sloped walls contact the plates; and

means **22** for attaching a plurality of bolts **10** to the facing strip without the bolts penetrating through the facing strip:

a backing strip **9** disposed to cover the adjacent edges of the plates on the side of the plates opposite the facing strip; and

a plurality of bolts **10** for holding the facing strip, plates, and backing strip together (Figures 1-4).

Lendi fails to disclose a joint comprising a pair of steel plates.

The applicant is reminded that the selection of a known material based upon its suitability for the intended use is a design consideration within the skill of the art. In re Leshin, 227 F.2d 197, 125 USPQ 416 (CCPA 1960). Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify a joint as disclosed by Lendi to have a pair of steel plates as such material is a well-known, widely used and commercially available material within the art.

As to claim 14, Lendi discloses a joint wherein the means **22** for attaching the plurality of bolts **10** to the facing strip **4** comprises a plurality of brackets **22** (not shown; inherently, at opposite ends of facing strip **4**) fixedly attached to the facing strip, each of the brackets being configured to receive a bolt (Figures 3-4).

As to claim 15, Lendi discloses a joint wherein at least two of the brackets **22** have slots for receiving a bolt **10**, the slots being disposed on opposing sides of the brackets (Figures 3-4).

As to claim 24, Lendi discloses a method capable of forming a bullet proof joint, the method comprising:

placing an edge of a first metal plate **17** adjacent an edge of a second plate **17** so as to form a joint,

selecting a joint strip, the joint strip comprising a facing strip **4** which is formed to have two rearwardly extending walls terminating at lateral edges **23** and at least one bracket **22** attached to the facing strip for holding an end of a bolt **10** to the facing strip, the at least one bracket being attached to the facing strip independent of the bolt; and

covering the joint between the steel plates with the joint strip so that the only portion of the facing strip which touches the first and second plates is the lateral edges (Figures 1-4).

Lendi fails to disclose a method comprising a pair of steel plates.

The applicant is reminded that the selection of a known material based upon its suitability for the intended use is a design consideration within the skill of the art. In re Leshin, 227 F.2d 197, 125 USPQ 416 (CCPA 1960). Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify a method as disclosed by Lendi to comprise a pair of steel plates as such material is a well-known, widely used and commercially available material within the art.

10. Claim 24 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kellogg (US 1,724,601).

As to claim 24, Kellogg discloses a method capable of forming a bullet proof joint, the method comprising:

placing an edge of a first plate **B** adjacent an edge of a second plate **B** so as to form a joint,

selecting a joint strip, the joint strip comprising a facing strip **J** which is formed to have two rearwardly extending walls terminating at lateral edges and at least one bracket **E** attached to the facing strip capable of holding an end of a bolt to the facing strip, the at least one bracket being attached to the facing strip independent of the bolt; and

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covering the joint between the plates with the joint strip so that the only portion of the facing strip which touches the first and second plates is the lateral edges (Figures 1-3).

Kellogg fails to disclose a method comprising a pair of steel plates.

The applicant is reminded that the selection of a known material based upon its suitability for the intended use is a design consideration within the skill of the art. In re Leshin, 227 F.2d 197, 125 USPQ 416 (CCPA 1960). Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify a method as disclosed by Kellogg to comprise a pair of steel plates as such material is a well-known, widely used and commercially available material within the art.

11. Claims 1-3,5-8,10,12,13,16,20 and 21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kellogg in view of Dalbec (US 4,028,856).

As to claim 1, Kellogg discloses a joint capable of use with bullet traps, the joint comprising:

a first plate **B**;

a second plate **B** disposed in a linear arrangement with the first plate so as to form a joint;

a facing strip **J** disposed along the joint, the facing strip having a first end and a second end with lateral edges extending along the sides therebetween configured for engaging the first plate and the second plate, the facing strip being bent between the lateral edges of the facing strip so as to slope outwardly toward the first plate and the

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second plate and contact the first plate and the second plate only at the lateral edges of the facing strip;

a backing means **A** placed along the joint on the side of the first and second plates opposite the facing strip: and

at least one nail **I** for attaching the facing strip to the backing means, the at least one nail being attached to the facing strip without penetrating therethrough (Figures 1-3).

Kellogg discloses a joint comprising a nail **I** for attaching the facing strip **J** to the backing means **A**, instead of a bolt (Figure 2).

Dalbec teaches a joint comprising a bolt **40** for attaching a facing strip **22** to a backing means **14** (Figure 5). Inasmuch as the references disclose nails and bolts as art recognized equivalents, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the exercise art to substitute one for the other. In re Fout, 675 F.2d 297, 301, 213 USPQ 532, 536 (CCPA 1982).

As to claim 2, Kellogg discloses a joint comprising at least one bracket **E** attached to the facing strip **J** capable of receiving a bolt (Figure 2).

As to claim 3, Kellogg discloses a joint wherein the at least one bracket **E** comprises an opening capable of sliding a bolt into the bracket (Figure 2).

As to claim 5, Kellogg fails to disclose a joint wherein the facing strip has walls extending rearwardly to the first plate and the second plate at an angle of about 12.5 degrees.

The applicant is reminded that a change in the shape of a prior art device is a design consideration within the skill of the art. In re Dailey, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966). Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify a joint as disclosed by Kellogg to have a facing strip having walls extending rearwardly to the first plate and the second plate at an angle of about 12.5 degrees as such practice is a design consideration within the skill of the art.

As to claim 6, Kellogg discloses a joint wherein the bracket **E** contacts the first and second plates **B** (Figure 2).

As to claim 7, Kellogg discloses a joint capable of use with a bullet trap, the joint comprising:

- a first plate **B**;
- a second plate **B** having an edge disposed adjacent an edge of the first plate;
- a facing strip **J** having a bent central portion and walls having lateral edges extending substantially the length of the facing strip and extending away from the bent central portion, the facing strip disposed along the adjacent edges of the first and second plates such that only the lateral edges of the facing strip contact the first and second plates; and
- at least one bracket **E** attached to the facing strip capable of engaging a bolt so as to hold the bolt to the facing strip without penetrating therethrough: and
- at least one nail **I** for holding the facing strip against the first and second plates (Figures 1-3).

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Kellogg discloses a joint comprising a nail **I** for holding the facing strip **J** against the plates **B**, instead of a bolt (Figure 2).

Dalbec teaches a joint comprising a bolt **40** for holding a facing strip **22** against first and second plates **20** (Figure 5). Inasmuch as the references disclose nails and bolts as art recognized equivalents, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the exercise art to substitute one for the other. In re Fout, 675 F.2d 297, 301, 213 USPQ 532, 536 (CCPA 1982).

As to claim 8, Kellogg fails to disclose a joint wherein walls of the facing strip extend rearwardly from the bent central portion at an angle of about 12.5 degrees.

The applicant is reminded that a change in the shape of a prior art device is a design consideration within the skill of the art. In re Dailey, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966). Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify a joint as disclosed by Kellogg wherein walls of the facing strip extend rearwardly from the bent central portion at an angle of about 12.5 degrees as such practice is a design consideration within the skill of the art.

As to claim 10, Kellogg discloses a joint comprising:

a first plate **B**;

a second plate **B** having an edge thereof disposed adjacent an edge of the first plate;

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a facing strip **J** configured to engage the first and second plates, the facing strip being bent along the center thereof such that only the edges of the facing strip which are parallel to the bend contact the bullet proof plates; and

at least one bracket **E** attached to the facing strip and having an opening capable of receiving the head of a bolt and for holding the bolt to the facing strip without penetrating therethrough; and

at least one nail **I** for holding the facing strip against the plates (Figures 1-3).

Kellogg discloses a joint comprising a nail **I** for holding the facing strip **J** against the plates **B**, instead of a bolt (Figure 2).

Dalbec teaches a joint comprising a bolt **40** for holding a facing strip **22** against first and second plates **20** (Figure 5). Inasmuch as the references disclose nails and bolts as art recognized equivalents, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the exercise art to substitute one for the other. In re Fout, 675 F.2d 297, 301, 213 USPQ 532, 536 (CCPA 1982).

As to claim 12, Kellogg fails to disclose a joint wherein the facing strip has two walls disposed about 155 degrees from one another.

The applicant is reminded that a change in the shape of a prior art device is a design consideration within the skill of the art. In re Dailey, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966). Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify a joint as disclosed by Kellogg wherein the facing strip has two walls disposed about 155 degrees from one another as such practice is a design consideration within the skill of the art.

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As to claim 13, Kellogg discloses a joint comprising:

a pair of metal plates **B** disposed such that an edge of one plate is adjacent the edge of the other plate;

a joint strip disposed to cover the adjacent edges of the plates comprising:

a facing strip **J** defining a pair of sloped walls extending outwardly and rearwardly from a central portion extending along a long axis of the facing strip such that only the edges of the sloped walls contact the plates: and

means **E** capable of attaching a plurality of bolt: to the facing strip without the bolts penetrating through the facing strip:

a backing strip **A** disposed to cover the adjacent edges of the plates on the side of the plates opposite the facing strip; and

a plurality of nails **I** for holding the facing strip, plates. and backing strip together (Figures 1-3).

Kellogg discloses a joint comprising a plurality of nails **I** for holding the facing strip **J**, plates **B**, and backing strip **A** together, instead of bolts (Figure 2).

Dalbec teaches a joint comprising a bolt **40** for holding a facing strip **22**, plates **20**, and backing strip **14** together (Figure 5). Inasmuch as the references disclose nails and bolts as art recognized equivalents, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the exercise art to substitute one for the other. In re Fout, 675 F.2d 297, 301, 213 USPQ 532, 536 (CCPA 1982).

Kellogg fails to discloses a joint comprising a pair of steel plates.

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The applicant is reminded that the selection of a known material based upon its suitability for the intended use is a design consideration within the skill of the art. In re Leshin, 227 F.2d 197, 125 USPQ 416 (CCPA 1960). Accordingly, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify a joint as disclosed by Kellogg to have a pair of steel plates as such material is a well-known, widely used and commercially available material within the art.

As to claim 16, Kellogg discloses a method capable of reducing splatter through a opening in a bullet trap, the method comprising:

disposing first and second plates **B** adjacent one another so as to leave an opening;

selecting a facing strip **J**, the facing strip being bent lengthwise into an angle;

selecting a plurality of attachment nails **I**;

attaching the plurality of attachment nails to the facing strip such that the nails do not penetrate the facing strip;

placing a facing strip over the opening generally parallel to the opening so that the facing strip slopes rearwardly and outwardly such that the only portion of the facing strip brought into engagement with the first and second plates to secure the plates together is the lateral edges of the facing strip (Figures 1-3).

Kellogg discloses a method comprising a plurality of nails **I**, instead of bolts (Figure 2).

Dalbec teaches a method comprising a plurality of bolts **40** (Figure 5). Inasmuch as the references disclose nails and bolts as art recognized equivalents, it would have

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been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the exercise art to substitute one for the other.

In re Fout, 675 F.2d 297, 301, 213 USPQ 532, 536 (CCPA 1982).

As to claim 20, Kellogg discloses a method capable of forming a section of a bullet trap, the method comprising:

placing first and second plates **B** adjacent one another so as to leave a seam therebetween;

selecting a joint strip having a facing strip **J** which is beveled to have two rearwardly extending walls terminating at lateral edges and a bracket attached to the facing strip capable of holding an end of a bolt to the facing strip, the bracket being attached to the facing strip independent of the bolt; and

covering the seam between the plates with the facing strip so that a nail **I** extends through the seam: and

engaging the lateral edges of the facing strip with the first and second plates so that the only portion of the facing strip which touches the first and second plates is the lateral edges (Figures 1-3).

Kellogg discloses a method comprising a nails **I**, instead of a bolt (Figure 2).

Dalbec teaches a method comprising a bolt **40** (Figure 5). Inasmuch as the references disclose nails and bolts as art recognized equivalents, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the exercise art to substitute one for the other. In re Fout, 675 F.2d 297, 301, 213 USPQ 532, 536 (CCPA 1982).

As to claim 21, Kellogg discloses a method comprising placing a backing strip **A** along the seam on the side of the plates **B** opposite the joint strip **J** (Figure 2).

Response to Arguments

12. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-22 and 24 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. The newly added limitations of the at least one bolt being attached to the facing strip without penetrating therethrough in claim 1 (line 12) and claim 16 (line 6), at least one bracket attached to the facing strip for engaging a bolt so as to hold the bolt to the facing strip without penetrating therethrough in claims 7 and 10 (line 10), and a facing strip defining a pair of sloped walls extending outwardly and rearwardly such that only the edges of the sloped walls contact the plates in claim 13 (line 6) and claim 20 (line 10) necessitated the new grounds of rejection.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to the applicant's disclosure. The following patents show the state of the art with respect to joint assemblies:

Gonzalez (US 5,600,084) and Middione et al. (US 5,670,734) are cited for pertaining to joints comprising first and second plates, a facing strip, a backing means and a bolt.

13. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael P. Ferguson whose telephone number is (571)272-7081. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (8:00-5:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Daniel P. Stodola can be reached on (571)272-7087. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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